

Editorial Rooms, The Record.
Chicago, May 18, '97.

Miss L. M. Tarbell
New York City,
Dear Miss Tarbell:

I have received your letter enclosing The
Communication from George L. Porter.

I told the story of the burial of Booth
just as I heard it from my uncle and
from the General and I cannot make it
any stronger by saying that I am certain
of its truth. The very secrecy with
which the body was buried renders
it especially difficult to prove by
documentary evidence just who
did the work. But it would stand to
reason that Secy. Stanton would
entrust this important mission to
the man who had already played so
important a part in the search and
who, as his chief of detectives,
could be trusted to guard the secret
well. Most of the facts must come,
therefore, from men who took part in

the burial as did my uncle. I hardly need say that he was a man of scrupulous truthfulness.

Dr. Porter says that he was medical officer at the arsenal "at that time" but his commission as he copies it bears date April 30 whereas Booth's body was buried two days before on the 28th.

Porter's commission speaks of the prisoners, presumably Payne - of whom he testified in the trial - and Herald and others; it does not mention Booth's body which never was in the arsenal at all but which was kept on the gun-boat.

Gen. Baker received his orders by word of mouth from Lieut. Stanton and carried them out promptly. There were other men around at the time of the burial - as my story says - but my uncle never knew who they were. Possibly some of the men whom Dr. Porter knew might have been present. This is the first time I have heard Gen. Baker's

and Lint. Baker's connection with the affair denied. As to the exact location of the old penitentiary at the time of the war I have no personal knowledge. I was not among the living at that time. But I followed my uncle's narrative closely. Of course there was no suggestion that "a tunnel was excavated" into the old penitentiary building. This is one of the grotesque absurdities of the communication. My uncle in speaking of it called it variously a "hole" or a "door". How far the body was carried after going through this hole to reach the cell I do not know.

The suggestion that the trip of Lint. Baker alone with Booth's body is an "ingenious romance" is hardly worthy of consideration because Dr. Porter makes no claim to have any personal knowledge of the subject. He merely implies, and it seems strange that he should go out of his way to question an assertion of which he knows nothing whatever. But while I am on the subject I might refer to page 6321, volume 58 Official Records of the

Civil War on which Lieut. Doherty says in his official report dealing with the return from Garrett's house to Belle Plaine: "Mr. Baker" continued on, missing me and The road. I arrived at Belle Plaine at 6 p.m. and found the corpse not yet arrived". Doherty's report is not altogether correct and in this case, in which he seeks to find fault with Baker for going off alone with Booth's body, it certainly is. And there are plenty of other proofs of this part of the story.

Of course I had expected some objection to the story but I am confident of every detail - that it cannot successfully be assailed in any particular. I return Dr. Porter's communication herewith. I thank you for the privilege of examining it.

Very sincerely yours, Ray S. Baker